4.

AN

ATTEMPT

TOWARDS

A DEFENCE

OF

VIRGIL

AGAINST

THE ATTACKS

OF

J. D'ISRAELI.

SHERBORNE:

Printed and sold by GOADBY and LERPINIERE;

Sold also by L. B. SEELEY, Pater-noster-Row; and Messrs. RIVINGTONS, St. Paul's Church-Yard, London.

BODLEIAN
P
5 MAR 1958
LIBRARY

AN

ATTEMPT, &c.

THE Compiler of a work lately publiſhed in 2 vols. 8vo. under the title of *(a)* "Curioſities of Literature," employs ſeveral pages of Vol. I. in enumerating a ſeries of heavy charges, with which he has not ſcrupled to load an author of no leſs repute than the Prince of the Roman Poets.—The ſubject of theſe papers is an endeavour to ſhew, how groundleſs his cenſures are.—I ſhall conſider them in the order in which they occur in the above-mentioned miſcellaneous production.

The criticiſer ſets out with putting this queſtion—"Has not Virgil violated the immutable

 laws

(a) Vol. I. has gone through three editions (the laſt of which was publiſhed 1793), without the author's name to it. The ſecond volume was publiſhed 1793, with the name of the author—J. D'Israeli.—Printed for J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet-ſtreet.

" laws of common ſenſe—by his ſtrange mira-
" cles?—Amongſt theſe, is that of transforming
" into the leaves of a tree, of which Polydore
" is the root, the lances with which Polymneſtor
" had pierced him in the third book of the
" Æneid; in making *(b)* the branch of a tree
" produce a golden bough in the ſixth; and in
" metamorphoſing into ſea nymphs, in the *(c)* ele-
" venth book, the ſhips of Æneas, which are
" ſet on fire."

I ſhall not enter into a diſquiſition *how far* the MARVELLOUS is admiſſible in poetry. We know, that FICTION is eſſential to it—and that the intervention of a *Deity* has generally, if not always been conſidered as a *ſalvo* for its being carried to *whatever* extreme. It may be preſumed that Virgil was full as competent a judge of its propriety, under this reſtriction, as any perſon who may take upon himſelf to animadvert upon him.—Indeed, with regard to the diſtillation of blood from the myrtle, of which Polydore is ſuppoſed to be the *root*, and the lances, with which Polymneſtor had pierced him, the *leaves*, as

(b) " The branch produce a bough"—very inaccurately expreſſed; the *bough* of a tree not being produced by the *branch*, but the *branch* by the *bough*, from which it is a ſhoot.

(c) Inſtead of the *eleventh*, it ſhould have been the *ninth* book,

(as they are here called) or rather the *boughs* or *branches*, Mr. Pope, in the preface to his tranſlation of the Iliad, declares, that this prodigy has not the ſanction of any ſupernatural cauſe. But this aſſertion is fully confuted by Dr. Trapp, in his 30th Poetical Prelection. Amongſt the paſſages cited by him for this purpoſe, are the following words from the mouth of the relator of this wonderful phænomenon—" *Monſtra Déum* " *refero*"—where, by *Monſtra Déum* I apprehend to be ſignified (agreeably to the etymology of the term MONSTRA, *a monſtrando*) a *diſplay*, the effects of which the relator himſelf had been an eye-witneſs to, of the interpoſition of ſome *ſupernatural power*.

In a note to Mr. Pitt's Tranſlation of the Æneid, by Dr. Warton, on the place, a paſſage is quoted from Biſhop Warburton, wherein he conſiders the Omen expreſſed in the 36th ver. [" Rite ſecundarent viſus, *omenq*; levarent"] as of that kind which was " always ſuppoſed to be produced by the intervention of a ſupernatural power, as was *the raining of blood*, ſo frequently related by the Roman annaliſts."

Spence, in his Polymetis, obſerves, that " the " common idea among the ancients of nymphs " or intellectual beings annexed to trees, muſt " have made," amongſt other wonderful ſtories, that

that of " Polydore in Virgil appear much more " natural and obvious to the readers *then* than to " us *now*."—Warton tells us, that " the only way to judge truly of the ancients, in points that " are purely ancient, is to imagine ourſelves in " *their* places, with the ſame ſort of ideas which " *they* had, and the ſame circumſtances of things " about us." He adds—that " the divinities and " intelligences, with which, in the time of Au- " guſtus, their rivers, groves, &c. were ſtocked, " were not poetical ornaments, but the real ob- " jects of the belief of the common people, and " the profeſſed religion of the great"—Need I ſay any thing of the *(d) Hamadryads*—the *(e) oracular* oaks of Dodona, &c. &c.

As to the particular circumſtance, in Polydore's metamorphoſis, of *the lances with which he had been transfixed being changed into leaves* (or *branches*) —we are to ſuppoſe, that the aſſaſſin, on burying the body, pierced it with darts, which we may further

(d) Rural deities in the Pagan theology, or nymphs of the woods, whoſe fate depended on particular trees, together with which they were ſuppoſed to be born and to die—their name derived from ἅμα *together with*, and δρυς, an *oak*.

(e) In the neighbourhood of Dodona was a temple of Jupiter, ſurrounded by an extenſive grove, which was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and oracles were ſaid to be delivered by the ſacred oaks.

further conceive to have taken root, and to have been incorporated with the ſubſtance of Polydore. This fiction (according to *(f)* Servius) is founded on a tradition, that a dart thrown by Romulus from the Aventine Mount to Mount Palatine was fixed in the ground, and grew into a tree.

The myſtery of the *golden bough* is clearly ſolved by Warburton in his diſſertation on the ſixth book of the Æneid. On the principle, which he advances, of this book's being a *figurative deſcription of Æneas's inſtitution into the (g) myſteries*, he ſhews that, under this golden branch is concealed the *wreath of myrtle*, with which the initiated were crowned at the celebration of them. He tells us, that the reaſon why this myrtle-branch is repreſented to be of *gold*, is, that "a "*golden bough* was literally part of the ſacred "equipage in the ſhews of the Myſteries"—in confirmation of which, he cites the following paſſage from Apuleius, who, in his account of a proceſſion of the initiated into the Myſteries of *(h) Iſis*, ſays—

(f) His words are—"Traxit hoc de hiſtoria Romanâ—nam "Romulus, captato augurio, haſtam de Aventino monte in "Palatinum jecit; quæ fixa fronduit, et arborem fecit."—Note on the word *increvit*. Æn. L. 3. V. 46.

(g) The Eleuſinian Myſteries, in honour of Ceres, called, by way of eminence, *the* Myſteries.

(h) *Iſis* had the names of Ceres, &c.

ſays—" *(i)* Ibat tertius, attollens *palmam auro* " *ſubtiliter foliatam*"—and again, deſcribing the fifth perſon in the proceſſion—" *(k)* Quintus " *auream vannum* aureis congeſtam ramulis"—But—ſetting aſide the *allegorical* meaning, if the *golden bough* be conſidered merely as a *poetic fiction*, it is certainly entitled to an equal degree of credit with that of the famed apples in the gardens of the *(l)* Heſperides.

I might add, that *(m)* the miſſeto, to the appearance of which Virgil compares that of the gold

(i) Metam. L. 11. P. 383.—" A third perſon advanced, elevating a palm-branch of exquiſite golden foliage."

(k) Metam. L. 11. P. 383.—A fifth—with a golden van, [or Fan—uſed in the celebration of the Myſteries] made up of ſprigs of gold.

(l) Three nymphs, daughters of Heſperus.—They were appointed to guard the tree that bore *golden apples*, which Juno gave to Jupiter, on the day of their nuptials.

(m) Quale ſolet ſylvis brumali frigore *viſcum*
Fronde virere novâ, quod non ſua ſeminat arbos,
Et *croceo* fœtu teretes circumdare truncos.
Talis erat ſpecies auri frondentis opacâ
Ilice.———Æn. L. 6. V. 204, &c.

" As miſſeto in woods, in winter's froſt,
" Not by its own congenial plant produc'd,
" Is wont to ſpring with recent leaves, and round
" The trunks in ringlets twines its yellow ſhoots;
" Such was the figure of the blooming gold
" Within the oak o'erſhadowing."——TRAPP.

gold ſhining in the midſt of the thick ſhady oak, does, from the tranſparency of its yellowiſh berries, when viewed, at a tolerable diſtance, in the winter, in ſome degree reſemble a *golden bough*.

As to the metamorphoſis of the ſhips into ſea nymphs—Book 9th (not the 11th, as this writer has, by a ſtrange miſtake, aſſerted in words *at full length)* the poet has guarded againſt the imputation of being the *author* of this ſtory, by mentioning it as a tradition—" Priſca fides " dicto."——However—ſince theſe ſhips were feigned to have been of trees, that had formed part of a grove conſecrated to *Cybele*, and were ſo far conſidered as having already partaken of ſome degree of *original divinity*, the effect on the judgement, from their fancied converſion into *goddeſſes*, is the leſs violent.

The next charge comes under the article of the " *cruel piety*" which Virgil is condemned for having diſtinguiſhed Æneas by, in " cauſing him " to immolate eight perſons on the funeral pile " of Pallas."—This accuſation is obviated by the reflection, that ſuch *immolation* was a *(n) religious rite*, and that the *pious* Æneas acted *perfectly in character* by his celebration of it. The *barba-*

 rity

(n) See Warton's note on Book 10, V. 746, of Pitt's Tranſlation of the Æneid.

rity muſt be placed to the account of the inſtitution itſelf; and *that* to the ignorance of the age in which it was practiced. It was incumbent on the poet, to deſcribe his hero as actuated by the principles of that peculiar ſyſtem of religion which obtained in the time in which he lived. —Cruel and ſavage as this cuſtom was, not long before Julius Cæſar's days *(o)*, (his words are "*Paulo ſupra hanc memoriam*,") at the funerals of the Gauls, the vaſſals and clients whom the deceaſed held moſt dear were caſt into the pile and burnt.

The poet is cenſured for having repreſented Æneas as "by much too cold," and "not a "little unfeeling," at "his deſertion of Dido," during whoſe "extreme violence of paſſion," he "*ſleeps* in the moſt perfect tranquillity."—So far is this charge from being juſt, that the ſcruples within the hero's breaſt, when compelled to diſcloſe to the Queen the neceſſity of his departure, indicate every ſymptom of the ſtrongeſt degree of love.—And—what were his ſenſations at the moment of leaving her? *(p)* "Multa gemens, "multoq;

(o) Cæſar de Bello Gallico—L. 6—§ 17.

——— *(p)* "Groaning deep,
"And ſtagger'd in his mind by mighty love."
TRAPP.

" multoq; animum labefactus amore."—It was his wiſh to comfort her, and ſoften her grief.*(q)*"

——" Lenire dolorem
" Solando cupit, & dictis avertere curam."—

But—what comes directly after? " Juſſa ta-
" men Divûm ſequitur."—He now appears in his true characteriſtick of *piety*. Mercury, at Jove's command, has directed him to fly from love and Dido. How would his reſiſting the decrees of fate have been conformable to the religious principles by which he is diſtinguiſhed?—At his interview (in the ſixth book) with Dido's ſhade, he ſays—

—— *(r)* " Per ſidera juro,
" Per ſuperos, & ſi qua fides tellure ſub ima eſt,
" Invitus, Regina, tuo de littore ceſſi—

—— *(q)* " Tries with care,
" And melting words, to ſooth her fierce deſpair."
PITT.

(r) Æn. 6. 458.

——" By the ſtars
" And by the Gods I ſwear, by all the faith
" Beneath the earth, if any ſuch there be:
" Unwillingly, O Queen, I left your coaſts.
" But the Celeſtial Powers, &c.
——" Urg'd me by their commands."
TRAPP.

" Sed me juſſa Deûm
" Imperiis egere ſuis."

The curious ſtring of criticiſms that follows would incline one to believe, that the author had never ſeen the paſſages which are the ſubjects of them, but had taken the whole of his obſervations, from ſome other hand, *on truſt*.

He tells us, that " Sinon and Achemenides preſent themſelves to the Trojans on two very different occaſions, but in nearly a ſimilar manner. The one in his ſecond book, and the other in the third, ſay the ſame thing."

There certainly is a *ſimilarity* in the air and manner in which theſe two perſons do preſent themſelves. Both of them appear in the form of *ſuppliants*—but—what then? There cannot be a fuller proof of ſkill and ingenuity, than ſuch a diſcrimination of ſimilar characters as, *(s)* together with the variety, preſerves a reſemblance. So far are Sinon and Achemenides from ſaying the ſame things, that there is not in the narrative of either of them a ſingle paſſage or ſentiment diſcoverable

——*(s)* Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diverſa tamen. OVID.

——" With features not the ſame,
" And yet not different, each."

diſcoverable in the other. The whole of the *ſameneſs* that occurs, during their reſpective exhibitions of themſelves, conſiſts—1ſt, in the encouragement given to each of them to repreſent his particular caſe, expreſſed in the following paſſages:

L. 2, 74.
——" Hortamur fari, quo ſanguine cretus."

L. 3, 608.
——" Fari, quo ſanguine cretus,
" Hortamur."

And 2dly, in the effect of this encouragement—
" Ille hæc, depoſitâ tandem formidine, fatur."
L. 2, 76.
Which line is repeated, L. 3, 612.

" The deſcriptions of the tempeſts are ſaid " too frequently to reſemble each other, and to begin two or three times *by* the ſame verſes."

In the Georgics, we have a deſcription (the only one) of a *land-ſtorm*, and likewiſe the general prognoſtics of wind and rain.—In the Æneid, two tempeſts occur—one in the firſt book, the other in the third. There is no deſcription of any in the fourth. We are only told, that there was a heavy one of hail. Unfortunately for our critic,

critic, the following note appears to Pitt's Tranſlation of the Æneid, as publiſhed by Warton, Book 3, V. 263—" We have here a deſcription " of a ſecond tempeſt. It is obſerved, that it is " entirely different from that in the firſt book.— " By deſcribing the ſame ſubject with new cir- " cumſtances, the poet admirably diſplays the " fruitfulneſs of his invention."—SEGRAIS.

The deſcription in the Georgics, of *the ſtorm at land* is of too great length to be here inſerted. —Thoſe of the tempeſts, in the firſt and third books of the Æneid, are preſented to the reader's view—that it may be ſeen, how far they reſemble each other.

(t) " Venti, velut agmine facto,
" Quà data porta, ruunt, & terras turbine perflant.
" Incubuere

(t) " The winds, embattled, as the mountain rent,
" Flew all at once impetuous thro' the vent;
" Earth, in their courſe, with giddy whirls they ſweep,
" Ruſh to the ſeas, and bare the boſom of the deep:
" Eaſt, Weſt, and South, all black with tempeſts roar,
" And roll vaſt billows to the trembling ſhore.
" The cordage cracks; with unavailing cries
" The Trojans mourn; while ſudden clouds ariſe,
" And raviſh from their ſight the ſplendours of the ſkies.
" Night hovers o'er the floods; the day retires;
" The heav'ns flaſh thick with momentary fires;
" Loud thunders ſhake the poles; from every place
" Grim death appear'd, and glar'd in ev'ry face."

PITT.

" Incubuere mari totumque à ſedibus imis
" Una Uruſq; Notuſq; ruunt, creberq; procellis
" Africus: & vaſtos volvunt ad litora fluctus.
" Inſequitur clamorq; virùm, ſtridorq; rudentum.
" Eripiunt ſubito nubes cœlumque, diemque
" Teucrorum ex oculis: ponto nox incubat atra.
" Intonuere poli, & crebris micat ignibus æther:
" Preſentemque viris intentant omnia mortem."
Æn. L. 1. 86.

(u) " Tum mihi cœruleus ſupra caput aſtitit
" imber,
" Noctem hyememque ferens: & inhorruit unda
" tenebris.
" Continuo venti volvunt mare, magnaq; ſurgunt
" Æquora: diſperſi jactamur gurgite vaſto:
" Involvere diem nimbi, et nox humida cœlum
" Abſtulit: ingeminant abruptis nubibus ignes."
Æn. L. 3, 194.

The

(u) " A duſky cloud hung gather'd o'er my head,
" Bringing on night, and ſtorm; upon the waves
" Lay horrid darkneſs: Boiſt'rous winds confound
" The rolling ſea, and mighty billows riſe.
" We, ſcatter'd o'er the boundleſs deep, are toſs'd;
" Tempeſts involve the day; a night of rain
" Obſcures the heav'ns: repeated lightnings flaſh
" From burſting clouds."
TRAPP.

The Verſe " *(x)* Obſtupui, ſteteruntq; comæ, " & vox faucibus hæſit," likewiſe here ſaid to be too often repeated occurs only *twice*—B. 2. V. 774,—B. 3. V. 48,—of the Æneid. The clauſe—" Vox faucibus hæſit," with the word *comæ* before it, *once*—B. 4. V. 280,—and the ſingle word *obſtupui* B. 2. V. 560—and B. 3. V. 298.

The death of Palinurus is conſidered as implying a contradiction, from its having been (as is alledged) related by the poet, " in the fifth book, " in one manner, and by Palinurus himſelf, in " the ſixth, differently. In one, it is the God of " Sleep, under the figure of Phorbas, who, having cauſed the pilot to fall aſleep, precipitates " him and the rudder into the ſea—in the other, " it is a gale of wind that carries them both " away. In one place, Palinurus is ſwallowed " up in a profound ſleep by the ſea; in the " other, he is perfectly awake, and has time to " reflect, that the ſhip will now wander without " a pilot."

In the fifth book (as is rightly obſerved) Palinurus is ſaid to have been precipitated, together with

(x) " Aghaſt I ſtood; uproſe my hair erect;
" And to my mouth my ſpeech with horror cleav'd."
TRAPP.

with the rudder, into the ſea by the *God of Sleep*, in the perſon of Phorbas—

(y) " Phorbanti ſimilis——
" Ecce Deus——
" ——ſuperincumbens, cum puppis parte revulſa
" Cumq; gubernaclo, liquidas projecit in undas
" Præcipitem."

Nor is this irreconcileable (however, at firſt ſight, it may appear to be ſo) with the account which he himſelf, being ignorant of the true cauſe, gives of the matter in the ſixth book. The only agent that had been concerned in perſuading him to yield to ſlumber (as mentioned in B. 5th) was, as he had every reaſon to believe, Phorbas. He could have had no conception of his eyes having been diſſolved by *a charm from a deity*. He tells his ſtory according to *his own idea* of what had happened.—On being interrogated by Æneas, " what god had drowned him in the " ſea, and how it happened, that the Oracle of " Apollo, which had pronounced, that he ſhould

(y) " In Phorbas' ſhape
——" the God,
" incumbent o'er him, broke
" The ſtern, and with a fragment of the ſhip,
" Plung'd him precipitate into the ſea."

TRAPP.

" paſs through the ocean ſafe, and reach the " Auſonian coaſt, had proved falſe," he replies—

———(z) " Neq; te cortina fefellit,
" Dux Anchiſiade ; nec me Deus æquore merſit.
" Namq; gubernaclum multa vi forte revulſum
" Cui datus hærebam cuſtos, curſuſq; regebam,
" Præcipitans traxi mecum."

There had been (as far as he knew) no deceit in the caſe. No god had thrown him overboard. (a) *Some how or other* [*fortè*] he had fallen headlong

(z) Æn. 6, 347.
" Nor you has Phœbus ſhrine deceived
" Brave Prince, Anchiſes' ſon ; nor did the god
" Plunge me into the ſea. For as I held
" The rudder, ſticking faſt, and ſteer'd our courſe ;
" Falling I drew it with me, torn by chance
" With mighty violence." TRAPP.

(a) This agrees with Ruceus's interpretation of the paſſage. His words are " forte cadens præceps"—Should it be objected, that the adverb *fortè* ought to be referred to *gubernaculum* [*fortè* revulſum], the ſame conſtruction ſeems to be allowable. In either caſe, the event is attributed to *chance*. All that Palinurus could recollect of the matter, was—that, at the very moment of his having graſped the helm with more than uſual firmneſs, [cui datus *hærebam* cuſtos] in defiance of the advice given him to *ſleep*, he was hurled into the waves, drawing after him the rudder itſelf, which had been torn from the ſhip by ſome *unaccountable* force [*fortè*]—but which however was in fact owing to his own violence in falling, whilſt he was

long into the waves, carrying the rudder along with him—and, after three days, had arrived ſafe, through the ocean, at the coaſt of Italy, as it had been foretold, he ſhould do.

———(b) " Vix lumine quarto
" Proſpexi Italiam, ſummâ ſublimis ab unda.
" Paulatim adnabam terræ, & jam tuta tenebam."

On which the annotator of the Delphin edition of Virgil obſerves—" Quod ſatis erat, ut im-
" pleta videretur fides oraculorum, quæ ambigua
" ſolebant eſſe."

(c) There does not appear to be any mention made, or hint given, of Palinurus's having been

 carried

was aſleep—a circumſtance which he could have had no ſuſpicion of—as he was entirely ignorant of the impulſe that occaſioned it.

(b) Æn. 6, 358.

" Scarce upon the fourth
" Appearing dawn, I ſaw the Italian coaſt,
" High from the topmoſt billow. By degrees
" I ſwam to land—and now had ſafe arriv'd."

TRAPP.

(c) We are told that

——" Smooth along the flood the navy rode
" Safe in the promiſe of the watery God."

PITT.

" Currit itur tutum non ſecius æquore claſſis,
" Promiſſiſq; patris Neptuni interrita fertur."

Æn. 5, 862.

carried away into the ſea by a gale of wind. The firſt word that occurs of any extraordinary wind is, ſubſequent to his falling overboard, where he ſays of himſelf—

(d) " Tres Notus hybernas immenſa per æquora
" noctes
" Vexit me violentus aquâ."

But—where is he deſcribed as *ſwallowed up in a profound ſleep by the ſea?*—He is repreſented as *only plunged into it*—" liquidas *projecit* in undas " *præcipitem*"—the immediate effect of which was, that he became perfectly awake—ſo as to to call on his friends repeatedly for ſuccour.—" Sociis—ſæpe vocatis."—That he ſhould have had " time to reflect, that the ſhip would now " wander without a pilot," is ſurely no ſuch matter of ſurpriſe or inconſiſtency, when we conſider, that there was a ſpace of no leſs than three days between his being ſhipwrecked and reaching the Italian ſhore.

It is next objected to the poet, that by making Æneas to " return from Hell by the gate of " ivory, from whence iſſued fables and fictions, " [quà

(d) Æn. 6, 355.
" Three nights tempeſtuous o'er the boundleſs deep,
" Rough Notus bore me."
TRAPP.

" [quà falſa ad Cœlum mittunt inſomnia manes]
" he deſtroys, at a ſingle ſtroke, the whole that
" he has been recounting in his ſixth book."

In this our Author is not ſingular. He has the concurrence of various commentators. But —according to Trapp and Warburton, the apparent impropriety in this piece of mythology proceeds from a wrong idea's having been annexed to the epithet *falſa*, which does not ſignify, agreeably to the common acceptation of the word, *falſe*, or *lying*, but *ſhadowy*, or *viſionary*. The whole of what Æneas is ſuppoſed to have ſeen in the infernal regions was *a mere ſhew*—an exhibition of *ghoſts* and *apparitions* paſſing in review—" the *ſhadowy repreſentation* of another ſtate."

Warburton, after having pointed out the abſurdity of imagining Virgil, with one daſh of his pen, to have defeated his whole deſign of rendering the doctrine of a future ſtate intereſting to his reader, ſays—" The truth is, the difficulty can never be
" gotten over but by ſuppoſing the *deſcent* to
" ſignify *an initiation into the Myſteries*. This will
" unriddle the ænigma, and reſtore the poet to
" himſelf. And if this was Virgil's meaning, it
" is to be preſumed, he would give ſome pri-
" vate mark to aſcertain it: for which no place
" was ſo proper as the concluſion. He has
" therefore,

" therefore, with a beauty of invention peculiar " to himſelf, made this fine improvement on " Homer's ſtory of the two gates; and imagin- " ing that of horn for true viſions, and that of " ivory for falſe, inſinuates by the firſt the *reality* " of another ſtate; and by the ſecond, the *ſha-* " *dowy* repreſentations of it in the ſhews of the " *Myſteries:* So that not the things objected to " Æneas, but the ſcenes of them only, were " falſe—as they lay not in *Hell*, but in the Tem- " ple of Ceres."

Perhaps the following extract from a note of Profeſſor Martyn's in his tranſlation of the Georgics (B. 4, V. 219) may caſt ſtill further light upon the matter.

After having obſerved, that the belief of a future ſtate plainly appears in the ſixth book of the Æneid, he adds " I know it will be replied, " that the commentators are almoſt unanimouſly " of opinion, that Virgil himſelf declares what " he has ſaid of the future ſtate in the ſixth " book of the Æneid to be a fiction, which he " plainly expreſſes by the paſſage of Æneas " through the ivory gate. But it ſeems impro- " bable, that the poet ſhould beſtow ſo much " pains in compoſing that fine account of the in- " fernal regions, ſhould take an opportunity of " making ſo delicate a compliment to Auguſtus

" and

" and the Roman people, and at laſt conclude " with giving them to underſtand, that there " was no truth in what he had been ſaying. " The tranſparent gate of horn was that through " which the true ſhades were ſent—[' Cornea, " quà veris facilis datur exitus umbris'] and the " opake gate of ivory ſerved for the paſſage of " falſe viſions—" Quà falſa ad Cœlum mittunt " inſomnia manes."—" Æneas therefore being " a ſolid body, and no real ſhade, was not ſent " out at the gate appropriated to true viſions, " but at that through which falſe viſions, being " bodies of a more denſe ſubſtance than the " true, were accuſtomed to paſs. Had he been " let out at the horn-gate, the whole muſt have " been taken for a *viſion*, though a true one; but " Æneas being a living body, and no proper in- " habitant of thoſe regions, had been admitted, " before the ſeparation of his ſoul from his body, " to converſe with ſpirits, not *in a viſion*, but *in* " *reality*. The opake gate therefore was the " moſt proper gate for the paſſage of a ſoul, " whilſt yet encumbered with a terreſtrial body."

How far theſe attempts towards a ſolution of the difficulty may prove ſatisfactory, will depend on the opinion of each perſon who ſhall examine their validity. If they do not *clear it up*, they ought at leaſt to incline us to ſuſpend our determination, and not to place too great confidence in

our

our own judgement. In a performance which is the ſtandard of accuracy as well as elegance, and eſpecially, in a paſſage belonging to it which is introduced with a peculiar air of ſolemnity,—[" Sunt geminæ ſomni portæ"] it is reaſonable to conclude, that the poet, were he to ſpeak for himſelf, could anſwer for the propriety of every tittle of it.

In order to prove, that there is a contradiction in the repreſentation of Aſcanius's age, it is affirmed, that " in the ſecond book of the Æneid, " he appears a little child, led by the hand of " his father—that he could not have attained to " more than ſeven years—that, in the third, Andromache, calling to mind Aſtyanax her ſon, " and addreſſing herſelf to Aſcanius, ſays— " Were he living, he would now, like you, have " reached the age of puberty-----[" Et nunc " æquali tecum pubeſceret ævo"]—yet that Virgil makes him again but ſeven years in his " *fourth* book, when Dido holds Cupid in her " lap, who had aſſumed his figure-----and *yet*, " that, in *the very ſame book*, he is repreſented, " not as a *child*, but as a young and vigorous " *man*, in a hunting match, of which he gives " the deſcription."

The criticiſer's tranſlation of " Et nunc æquali " tecum pubeſceret ævo" [He would now, like you,

you, *have reached the age of puberty*] inclines me to ſuſpect, that he has but a ſlight acquaintance with the Latin tongue. What ſchool-boy does not know, that *verbs inceptives* imply a ſtate of progreſſion?—There is nothing in the words which ſuggeſts the idea of *maturity*. Trapp tranſlates them thus—" And now his age had " *bloomed* with equal years."—Thus Pitt—" His " *blooming* years had been the ſame as thine."—To have agreed with our author's verſion, the verb ſhould have been in the preter-plu-perfect tenſe of the potential mood. If expreſſed in *proſe*, it ſhould have been in ſomewhat like the following manner—" æquali tecum *pubuiſſet* " ævo."

What unpardonable inattention or ignorance does *this* cenſure betray—" Virgil, in his fourth " book, makes him [Aſcanius] again but ſeven " years, when Dido holds Cupid in her lap, who " had aſſumed his figure—yet in the very ſame " book, he is repreſented"—&c.

In the *fourth* book, Dido holds Aſcanius himſelf, not Cupid, in her lap—" gremio Aſcanium " detinet." His age is out of the queſtion. It is in the *firſt* book that ſhe has Cupid, in the form of Aſcanius, on her knees—and—as to his being " repreſented, in the fourth, not as a *child*, " but as a young and vigorous *man*," ſurely no-

thing can be more characteriſtical of the impetuoſity natural to a boy, than his being deſcribed as *ſcampering before the hunters*. No part of his conduct, during the chace, indicated the *young and vigorous man*. The impatience that he expreſſed, to be witneſs of an encounter with game of a *higher nature* than the *inertia pecora* (the *ignonoble*, and, comparatively, *ſluggiſh* herd that had preſented themſelves) very well ſuited the ſprightlineſs of diſpoſition, with which we may ſuppoſe him to have been animated.

The author, having gone through the objection laſt-mentioned, ſays—" Theſe things are very " irregular and diſſimilar: Contradictions which " are very material, and which cannot be recon- " ciled"—and yet he begins the very next paragraph thus—" Let it not be conſidered, that I " have collected theſe criticiſms to diminiſh the " reputation of Virgil."—He proceeds with obſerving—that—" as the Æneid is acknowledged " not to have received the finiſhing hand, it " may be rendered *uſeful* in exerciſing *the youthful* " *mind* to diſcern the *petty blemiſhes* amongſt the " greateſt beauties of a great maſter."

I thought it requiſite to lay theſe reflections before the reader, who probably will agree with me in judging them unworthy of further notice.

The

The charges already ſpecified, one would think, might have ſatisfied the rancour of the moſt rigid cenſurer—but—to crown the whole—one of the moſt beautiful ſimilies that ever came from the pen of a poet is next attacked.

We are told—that "Virgil is fallen into a "groſs error, when he compares Orpheus de-"ploring the loſs of his beloved Eurydice with "the nightingale *who* regrets the loſs of her "young. He firſt makes the nightingale ſing in "the ſhade of a poplar—'Populcâ mærens "Philomela ſub umbrâ,'—and directly after this "ſong is a nocturnal ſong—"flet noctem."—"How can the night and the ſhade of the poplar "meet together? Beſides, the nightingale ceaſes "to ſing, when it is delivered of its young."

It cannot be denied, that this admired paſſage has been objected to by *real critics*.—But then—the objection itſelf is founded on the *tranſcendency of its merit*.—In ſhort—it has been thought (and perhaps with ſufficient reaſon) to be too poetical in the mouth of Proteus.

But—we are aſked—"How can the night "and ſhade of the poplar meet together?"---- Where is it ſaid, that they do?----If Virgil is to be underſtood as confining, according to the general notion, the ſinging of his mournful bird to

the night, and affirming, that ſhe is, at the ſame time, bewailing her loſs " *populeâ ſub umbrâ*," we muſt ſeek for ſome other meaning of the word *umbra* in this place than what appears to have been hitherto affixed to it. Suppoſing the fact to be as repreſented above, I apprehend, that by *umbra* muſt here be ſignified, not *the ſhade itſelf* (which, without the aid of an Œdipus, we know, can happen only in the *day-time*) but, ſome *bough* of the poplar, which has its ſhare, with the reſt of the tree, in forming it----and on a branch of which, in the thickeſt part of the tree, the bird is imagined to have *perched at night*. This ſenſe of the word is authoriſed by the following paſſage in the firſt Georgic, V. 157---" Falce pre-" mes *umbras*"---where *umbras* is tranſlated by Martyn " overſhading boughs."----Indeed, whether we conceive the nightingale to be ſinging *at night*, or *by day*, we can form no other idea of her poſition, than that of her ſitting on ſome branch, under the cover of impendent boughs---" *(e)* Multaq; cantates *umbra* tegebat aves."---Propertius.---In Pliny's Natural Hiſtory the night-" ingale is ſaid " *(f)* denſare ſe frondium ger-" mine." In the Odyſſey, B. 19, V. 520, ſhe is

(e) " Thick, *ſhading boughs* the feather'd warblers ſcreen'd."

(f) " To keep itſelf cloſe in the covert of freſh-opening " leaves."

is mentioned as " Δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη " πυκινοῖσιν."---" Arborum in foliis ſedens denſis."

We have hitherto proceeded on the ſuppoſition, that the poet meant to repreſent the nightingale as ſinging *only in the night*.----But---is *the night* the *only* time of *her ſinging?* The fact is *demonſtratively* otherwiſe. The writer of theſe lines is ſituated on a ſpot, the vicinity of which abounds, at the regular ſeaſon, with theſe melodious ſongſters,----and their voice is frequently heard in the morning.----This circumſtance's not having been attended to is thus accounted for in a note on Georgic 1, V. 403, communicated to Profeſſor Martyn by Edward King, Eſq. in a letter from " Bromley in Kent, dated November 20, 1740. " *(g)* Nequicquam ſeros exercet noctua cantus."

" *Seros cantus* is peculiar to the owl----I know " no bird beſides that ſings only in the night.---- " The nightingales with us ſing in the day-time, " from about the middle of May, to the time " they leave us. This perhaps has not been at- " tended to, becauſe her voice in the day-time " is drowned in the neighbouring *chorus*. The " chirping, whiſtling, diſcord notes of various " other birds divert the undiſtinguiſhing ear from " attending

(g) " The owl forbears to ſing her nightly ſong."—Martyn's Proſe Tranſlation.

" attending to the ſingle part of the muſical " nightingale. We are apt to conſider her *ſolo-* " *part*, " *per amica ſilentia Lunæ*," when ſhe does " flete noctem"—VIRG.—" ſing darkling"—" MILTON."

May I be allowed to hazard, with all due deference to the ſuperior judgement of others, the following conjecture?

Suppoſing it to have been Virgil's intention, inſtead of limiting the ſinging of the nightingale to *the night*, to intimate, that ſhe ſings *by day* likewiſe, there ſeems to be a particular degree of energy in the *diſcretive conjunction* (as it is called by the grammarians) *At* [at illa, &c.] which otherwiſe, in my humble opinion, has the appearance of a mere expletive, and would perhaps have been omitted, by ſubſtituting the word *detraxerit*, in the room of *detraxit*. Accordingly, I beg leave to put this conſtruction on the whole paſſage. " So does the mournful Philomel [ſhel- " tered from the heat of the ſun] under a poplar " ſhade, lament the loſs of her young," &c.—but—[*at*]—ſhe does not, like the reſt of the tuneful quire, confine her muſic to *the day*.—" Flet " noctem"—" ſhe wails all night"—" Ramoque " ſedens"—and, *fixed to her branch*, " miſerabile " carmen *integrat*"----*begins afreſh* her melancholy ſong.—There is, it may be, a meaning in the expreſſion

preſſion—" Ramo ſedens," which has not been attended to. Virgil does not make uſe of *ſuperfluous* terms. We needed not to have been told, that the nightingale, whilſt ſinging, is perched on *ſome bough or other*. May it not be implied, that ſhe remains all night *immoveable* [*ſedens*—καθεζομενη] on *the very branch*, on which ſhe had ſettled at firſt?—And now " mæſtis latè loca " queſtibus implet"—There is nothing to interrupt the ſound of her melodious wailings.—In the words of a lady whoſe tranſlation of the original is cited, without mentioning her name, by Martyn—

" All night in mournful notes ſhe ſeeks relief,
" And the wide woods re-echo to her grief."

The grave reflection, that " the nightingale " ceaſes to ſing, when it is delivered of its " young," ſufficiently expoſes the *frigidity* of a critic, ſo thoroughly attached to *matter of fact*, as not to allow a poet the licence to grace his works with ſuch embelliſhments as his fancy may (conſiſtently with reaſon) ſuggeſt to him. However true it may be, that the nightingale does not, *in its regular courſe*, " ſing, after it is delivered " of its young," ſurely, the having its unfledged offspring cruelly torn from it, is a circumſtance, which fully juſtifies the poet in deſcribing the effect it is here feigned to have produced.—

During

During the time of *incubation* and *brooding*, her attention to her beloved objects ſooths and compoſes her—but—when deprived of theſe, what violation of common ſenſe is it, to conceive, that ſhe *now* devotes her time to melancholy, and the bemoaning of her loſs?

The ſtory of Virgil's having, in his ſecond Georgic, changed the word *Nola* (the name of a city, whoſe inhabitants, it ſeems, would not allow their waters to flow through his lands) into the general appellation of *Ora*, which Aulus Gellius tells us he had met with, but, at the ſame time, appears to give no great credit to, does not affect his literary character. Even if true, it is of too trifling a nature to merit the leaſt attention. I ſhall only obſerve on our author's exclamation on the occaſion—" ſo dreadful is the vengeance of " a poet" that (however frightened he may be at the " *genus irritabile vatum*") it is rather *mal à propos*---there not being much to be apprehended from that negative ſpecies of reſentment, which contents itſelf (as in the preſent caſe) with paſſing by an injury or affront in ſilence.

This curious *critique* concludes with the following compariſon between " the banquet which " Alcinous gives Ulyſſes in the Odyſſey, and that with which Dido entertains Æneas." The former (he obſerves) is " very beautiful, and

" perfectly

" perfectly gallant: but it appears there are " none but men present"—the latter " is not by " any means comparable to it in festal elegance. " In one, they sing the adventures of the gods, " and other themes, not less agreeable than gal- " lant: in the other, they sing concerning the " stars, and other philosophical matters. Let " the festive splendours of Alcinous be re- " moved to the Court of Carthage, and the feast " of Dido to the Pheacian island, and every " thing will then be in character."

It is somewhat extraordinary, that these observations on the two entertainments are taken (without any acknowledgement of their being borrowed) almost *verbatim* from *Melanges de Vigneul Marville*, tom. 3.—Warton cites them, at the end of the first book of Pitt's Translation of the Æneid, as the remarks of an entertaining and sprightly Frenchman---and adds---that Trapp will furnish us with an answer to his objection—whose words are—" To put so much natural " philosophy into a song, may seem strange to a " mere modern—Yet how much more grand " and noble is it than a silly story of Chloris and " Phyllis; and such like frothy trifles, which are " the subjects of songs in our times? By the " way, how pretty would have been an opera or " masquerade, to entertain Æneas and his friends " upon this occasion? What pity it is, the an-

" cients were not ſo polite and judicious as we " are?"

Thus far Dr. Trapp.—May I be allowed to proceed ſtill further?—Had the entertainment at Carthage been given *by Æneas to Dido*, the French writer might have had ſome foundation for his remarks.—It might then have been *more in character*, to have adapted the *feſtal elegance* to the ſuppoſed taſte and genius of a beautiful and accompliſhed Queen. Yet—even in this caſe, ſurely the impure loves of Mars and Venus, which were the burthen of the ſong that made ſo great a part of the boaſted gallantry of the Pheacian banquet, would have ill ſuited *(h)* her chaſte ears.—As it was—the royal preſider at the feaſt is repreſented as having, in order to grace it, judiciouſly made choice of a *philoſophical muſician*, who would moſt probably employ his talents on ſuch rational and ſublime ſubjects as could not but be grateful to a gueſt, of whom ſhe had evidently entertained the moſt exalted idea.

Our critic takes his leave of Virgil with an encomium on Maphæus Vegius, concerning whom he ſays----" What is remarkable of him, " he

(h) 'Till the time when this entertainment commenced, her mind had been inviolably attached to the memory of her late huſband Sichæus.

" he has, *with great felicity*, added a *thirteenth*
" book to the Æneid."

The true admirers of Virgil have ever deprecated any attempt towards enlarging his inimitable work. It may not be amiſs in this place to ſubjoin a paſſage in Cruſius's Lives of the Roman Poets.----" As for the abſurd notions of thoſe, who fancy he [Virgil] would have added
" ſome more books to the Æneid, and prolonged
" the action, if he had lived; it deſerves no an-
" ſwer, the meaneſt capacity being able to con-
" clude Æneas's marriage with Lavinia, as ne-
" ceſſarily following upon the death of Turnus
" and Amata. The deſtinies had long before in
" the poem granted him this and his *apotheoſis*.
" —Further than this Virgil could not go, with-
" out aſſuming the character of hiſtorian, and
" thereby deſtroying that of epic poet."

The following quotation from Mr. Pope is inſerted as a note on the laſt line of Pitt's tranſlation of the Æneid---" Virgil cloſes the whole
" ſcene of action by the death of Turnus, and
" leaves the reſt to be imagined by the mind of
" the reader; he does not draw the picture at
" full length, but delineates it ſo far, that we
" cannot fail of imagining the whole draught.
" For it is evident, that the fall of Turnus, by
" giving Æneas a full power over Italy, anſwers

" the whole deſign and intention of the poem;
" had he gone further, he had overſhot his mark."

Dr. Warton concludes *his* annotations thus—
" The action of the Æneid ends, according to
" the rules laid down by the beſt critics, where
" the mind is left in repoſe, without expectation
" of any farther event."

Some pains have been taken by our critic to inform us, that the above-mentioned Maphæus Vegius, from having been born at Lodi, ought to be called *Laudenſis*, and not *Laudanenſis*. This *important* obſervation, for which he quotes the authority of his *(i)* commentator, does indeed ſhew, that he has read the *title* of this *thirteenth* book. Had he gone one ſtep further, he would have found the following curious ſtricture on the very firſt line of the argument to this book----
" Non erat inſtituti ipſius auctoris, ultrà mortem
" Turni quidquam de Æneâ dicere: quippe in
" quâ ſumma ejus laus conſtituta erat; & ultrà
" quam nihil de eo glorioſum dici potuit, niſi
" quod in ſuperioribus libris prælibatum erat:
" videlicet, in Cœlum a venere transferendum.
" —Rutilos autem victores Æneæ ſubdidiſſe;
" Laviniam Æneæ nupſiſſe; Diis ſacrificatum
" eſſe

(i) Jodocus Badius.

" eſſe ob victoriam: per ſe manifeſtaria ſunt:
" *(k)* unde fruſtra quidam quadrigis rotam
" quintam addidit—Nam, ſi Homerum imitari
" voluit, debuit, ut ille in Hectore tracto opus
" clauſit, in Turno devicto etiam finem facere.
" Veruntamen, quia decimus tertius a Maphæo
" Vegio adjectus eſt, nolui ipſum demere, ſed
" paucis, quià facili, & multùm a Maronianis
" coloribus frigente venà compoſitus eſt, pre-
" currere: non ordinem, ſed vocabulorum quo-
" rundam elucidationem proſequens. *(l)*"

In

(k) Perhaps it may appear *hyper-critical*, to take notice, that the *quadriga* has its name from the number, not of the *wheels*, but of the *horſes* belonging to it. The idea however of putting a *fifth* wheel to a regularly conſtructed *four-wheeled* carriage is a happy illuſtration of the abſurdity of *adding* to a work already carried to *its full extent*.

(l) " It was not the intention of the author himſelf to
" ſpeak of Æneas, after the death of Turnus—an event
" which had raiſed his renown to its ſummit, and, beyond
" which, it was impoſſible to record any illuſtrious circumſtance
" reſpecting him, but what had been anticipated in the pre-
" ceding books—ſuch as that of his deſtined APOTHEOSIS,
" through the influence of Venus.—The ſubjection of the
" Rutilians to him—his marriage with Lavinia—his ſacri-
" ficing to the gods, on account of his victory—theſe are
" matters well known—ſo that it was to no purpoſe, for a
" man to add a fifth wheel to a four-wheel'd carriage. For
" if it was his [Virgil's] aim, to imitate Homer, as the latter
" concluded *his* work with the dragging of Hector's body, ſo
" ſhould

In the former part of the paſſage quoted above, the ſentiments of Cruſius and the commentator on Vegius, reſpecting the impropriety of *tacking* on another book to the Æneid, plainly coincide: and the words—" multùm a Maronianis colori-" bus frigente venâ," are ſufficiently expreſſive of the opinion which the annotator himſelf entertained of this *new* book.

What ſhare of *merit* it is really entitled to, let the reader judge from the effect *theſe* ſpecimens may have on his *ſtomach* and *ears*----

——V. 5---" Et demum ex alto *revomentes* corde
" dolorem"—
Alibi---" Et ſi qua eſt pone hanc curam, pater
" optime, quæſo"—
———" Nunc adſum, & patrem & ſocerum te
" lætus in omnem—
———" Qui haud parvâ ſpe ductus"—&c. &c.

In ſhort----the ſtile and ſentiments, throughout this performance, will, I believe, on a peruſal of it,

" ſhould *his own* terminate in the defeat of Turnus.—How-
" ever, ſince Maphæus Vegius has thought fit to tack on a
" thirteenth book, I was willing not to throw it aſide, but, as
" it is no elaborate performance, and written in ſo frigid a
" ſtyle as to fall infinitely ſhort of Virgil's glowing colours,
" to run it over with a few remarks; without any regard to
" order or regularity, but only with a view to the elucidating
" of here and there a particular expreſſion."

it, extort no higher compliment than what the following line conveys----

" *(m)* Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina,
" Mævi."

VIRG. Æ. 3, 90.

Thus have I attempted to vindicate the great Roman poet from a train of aſperſions, which, if admitted to be juſt, would ſink into diſrepute an author, whoſe works have hitherto been conſidered as having conſecrated his name to immortality. I have only to add, that, if the character and merit of the moſt celebrated writers were ſuffered to lie at the mercy of every criticiſing ſcribbler, there would ſoon be an end of all *literary* diſtinction. A VIRGIL would be degraded to a level with Maphæus Vegius---and a JOHNSON ranked in the ſame claſs with the *compiler of Curioſities of Literature.*

" *(m)* Is there a ſwain that hates not Bavius lays?
" Be it his curſe vile Mævius' verſe to praiſe."

PITT.